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Former Intelligence Man Speaks At Altrusa Meeting

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The reflections of an intelligence officer who served in World War II and the Korean conflict gave Troy Altrusans an interesting insight into a little-known activity of the armed forces.

The former officer is John F. Ball of Troy, a representative of the Lincoln National Insurance Co. and specialist in estate and business planning. He spoke to the Altrusans at the monthly dinner meeting held last evening at the Altrurian club.

Drawing principally on his experience in Korea, Ball sketched a broad outline of army intelligence operation. This was divided into three categories: strategic intelligence; combat intelligence which was composed of knowledge of enemy forces and activities; and counter-intelligence which strove to prevent the enemy forces from getting information which would aid them.

In addition to reported observations of sentries and army outposts, Ball told of the use of air force pilots, native spies sent into enemy territory, deserters and prisoners of war in accumulating information. The POW's proved to be a more valuable source than the deserters, he said, as the latter often were "planted" with misinformation. Clandestine informers are an important part of present-day intelligence.

"In order to be used effectively, the information needed to be processed immediately, evaluating the source and credibility, and its meaning interpreted," the speaker said. Resulting appraisals of such intelligence was disseminated in a continuous flow to the army officials to aid them in drawing up their estimates of the

military situations.

At one time there was a breach of 17 miles width in the Red Chinese line and the UN forces could have marched straight through to southeast Asia, Ball said, but were prevented from doing so by United Nations' directives in which Russia had a voice.

Ball concluded his talk with a brief reference to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which was organized after the Korean War and is not officially a part of the armed forces.

Miss Edna Holland, chairman of the International Relations Committee, introduced the speaker. Miss Thelma Thompson, president, introduced guests present: Mrs. Ball, Mrs. Pauline Mallinson and Mrs. Carl Copenhafer. Hostesses for the evening were Miss Janet Soelmann, Miss Frances Miles, Mrs. Annabel Knuckles and Mrs. Thelma Stephenson.